

Message Text

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LIMDIS - BRUSSELS FOR USEEC
E.O.: 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, DA, GL
SUBJ: HOME RULE FOR GREENLAND - U.S. INTERESTS
REF : STATE 119035

1. THE EMBASSY IS PLEASED THAT PROFESSOR FOIGHEL'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES BROUGHT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION THE NEED FOR A FUNDAMENTAL DISCUSSION OF GREENLAND'S FUTURE AND MORE SPECIFICALLY HOW U.S. INTERESTS THERE WILL BE AFFECTED. WE AGREE IN GENERAL WITH FOIGHEL'S ASSESSMENT, ALTHOUGH IT SEEMS A LITTLE ON THE OPTIMISTIC SIDE. OUR COMMENTS ON PARTICULAR ITEMS FOLLOW.

2. CONCERNING THE EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN GREENLAND, DENMARK AND GREENLAND WILL JOINTLY DECIDE ON WHETHER COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION OF RESOURCES WILL BE POSSIBLE. GREENLAND WILL, UNDER HOME RULE, HAVE VETO RIGHTS, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT DANISH VIEWS WILL IN MOST CASES BE DETERMINING. A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PURPOSELY VAGUE DOUBLE-TALK HAS TAKEN PLACE WITHIN THE HOME RULE COMMISSION, LEAVING THE IMPRESSION THAT GREENLANDERS WILL HAVE A LARGER VOICE THAN THEY WILL IN FACT HAVE. INASMUCH AS THE OIL COMPANIES HAVE GIVEN UP DRILLING, AT LEAST FOR THE NEAR FUTURE, THIS QUESTION WILL BE PUSHED TO THE BACK BURNER FOR A TIME. FUTURE DISCOVERIES

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OF MINERALS, OR THE PROSPECT OF ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF THE URANIUM, HOWEVER, COULD OPEN UP THE DISCUSSION AGAIN.

3. WITH RESPECT TO A MORATORIUM ON DANISH RESEARCH ACTIVITIES, WE BELIEVE THAT THIS STATEMENT IS INACCURATE. THE COMMISSION FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN GREENLAND PLANS TO CONTINUE ITS ACTIVITIES AS BEFORE. HOWEVER, ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS, BEARING ON THE ORIGINS OF THE GREENLAND ESKIMOS, WILL PROBABLY BE HALTED BECAUSE

OF GREENLANDIC SENSITIVITIES. WHEN THE GREENLANDERS THOROUGHLY UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF SUCH RESEARCH AND ARE SATISFIED THAT THE RESULTS WILL BE READILY AVAILABLE TO THEM, RESEARCH ON THIS SUBJECT WILL LIKELY CONTINUE. OTHER RESEARCH OF MILITARY RELEVANCE WILL CONTINUE, AS THE GREENLANDERS WILL NOT BE CONSULTED, AND DECISIONS WILL BE MADE IN COPENHAGEN.

4. WE RECOGNIZE, AS DO THE DANES, THAT THE PRESENT MOVE TOWARD HOME RULE IN GREENLAND MAY BE ONLY A FIRST STEP. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE BLEAK PROSPECTS FOR THEIR OWN NATIONAL INCOME FROM REVENUES DERIVED FROM RESOURCE EXPLOITATION, GREENLANDIC ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON DENMARK IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR A LONG TIME. THE PRESENT LEVEL OF SUBSIDY OF DOLLARS 200 MILLION PER YEAR IS NOT LIKELY TO INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY, BUT GREENLANDIC ASPIRATIONS WILL, AS HOME RULE BECOMES A FACT. IN OTHER WORDS, GREENLANDERS WILL EXPECT ALL OF THE BENEFITS, SALARIES, ECT., WHICH THE DANES, WHOM THEY WILL REPLACE, ARE NOW RECEIVING. THERE IS NO POSSIBLE WAY THAT THIS CAN BE MANAGED WITHIN THE DOLLARS 200 MILLION, UNLESS SERVICES ARE DRAMATICALLY REDUCED--A POLITICAL IMPOSSIBILITY. EITHER THE DANES WILL HAVE TO KICK IN MORE OR THE GREENLANDERS WILL BEGIN TO LOOK ELSEWHERE.

5. AS NOTED BY FOIGHEL, THE DANES ARE HOPING THAT A "FAROE-ISLAND APPROACH" WILL SATISFY THE GREENLANDERS' DESIRE FOR LIMITED AUTONOMY, WHILE THE MAIN DECISIONS (UNLIKE THE CASE OF THE FAROES) WILL CONTINUE TO BE MADE IN COPENHAGEN. THERE ARE THREE BASIC FALLACIES IN THIS APPROACH: FIRST, THE FAROESE ARE EUROPEANS AND "WESTERNIZED" SECRET

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AND EDUCATED TO A REASONABLE EXTENT, WITH THEIR OWN VIABLE ECONOMY. MANY, IF NOT MOST, GREENLANDERS, WHO ARE ETHNICALLY DIFFERENT, STILL LIVE ON THE MARGIN OF THE 20TH CENTURY. PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY, ALCOHOLISM, VAGRANCY AND UNEMPLOYMENT HARDLY EXIST IN THE FAROES, WHEREAS THEY ARE NOT UNCOMMON IN GREENLAND. SECOND, THE POOR COMMUNICATIONS AND ENORMOUS DISTANCES IN GREENLAND PREVENT A COHERENT, RESPONSIBLE GOVERNING PARTY FROM MAINTAINING CONTROL OVER THE VAST TERRITORY. THIS IS DONE EXCLUSIVELY NOW BY THE DANISH ADMINISTRATION. THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN GREENLAND, SUCH AS IT IS, IS IN THE HANDS OF ONLY A FEW HUNDRED GREENLANDERS. THIS IS A FRAGILE REED AT BEST AND WHEN COMPOUNDED BY ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES COULD CAUSE EVEN THE MOST RESPONSIBLE GREENLANDER TO CAST ABOUT FOR HELP. IF THIS HELP IS NOT FORTHCOMING FROM DENMARK (OR THE EC), GREENLANDERS WILL INEVITABLY LOOK ELSEWHERE. FINALLY, AS IN OTHER DEVELOPING SOCIETIES IN THE STAGE OF HOME RULE, LOCAL LEADERS ARE FASCINATED BY THE POLITICAL PROCESS, NOT BY ECONOMIC FACTS. THE NEW LEADERS, ONCE THEY HAVE DIGESTED MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS, EDUCATION, MEDIA, ETC., WILL INEVITABLY WANT TO HAVE SOME SAY IN SEXIER ISSUES LIKE DEFENSE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND UNDERGROUND RESOURCES.

6. SOME DANES REALIZE THE PITFALLS DESCRIBED ABOVE AND ARE ATL TOO WILLING TO CLEAR OUT AND LET THE GREENLENDERS SINK OR SWIM ON THEIR OWN. OTHER LANES BELHEVE, SOMEWHAT NAIVELY, THAT ONCE THE GREEN-

LANDERS HAVE HOME RULE, THEY WILL BE SATISFIED AND NO FURTHER CHANGES WILL NEED TO BE MADE. A THIRD GROUP, THE MOST REALISTIC, UNDERSTAND THAT HOME RULE IS NECESSARY NOW BUT THAT IT IS PROBABLY ONLY AN INTERIM STEP TOWARDS SOMETHING MORE LIKE INDEPENDENCE LATER ON.

7. AS FAR AS U.S. INTERESTS ARE CONCERNED, FOIGHEL ECHOED OFFICIAL DANISH POLICY, I.E., THE U.S.-DANISH DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP WILL NOT BE AFFECTED. FURTHERMORE, HE IS CORRECT IN STATING THAT THE STATUS OF THE AMERICAN BASES HAS NOT COME UP IN TALKS WITH ANY GREENLANDERS. THIS IS PROBABLY PRIMARILY BECAUSE SO FEW GREENLANDERS HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH THE BASES NOR DO THEY SEE ANY PRACTICAL PROBLEMS WITH THEM. AT A LATER STAGE, IF THE ECONOMIC AID FROM DENMARK WHICH THEY BELIEVE THEY ARE ENTITLED TO HAVE IS NOT FORTHCOMING, THE GREENLANDERS COULD WELL BE TEMPTED TO INDULGE IN THE SECRET

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TYPE OF BARE BLACKMAIL WHICH WE HAVE SEEN IN OTHER PLACES AROUND THE WORLD VIS-A-VIS BASE RIGHTS.

8. IN SUMMARY, WE WOULD REITERATE WHAT WE HAVE SAID IN PREVIOUS COMMUNICATIONS--THAT U.S. INTERESTS IN GREENLAND ARE BEST SERVED BY KEEPING GREENLAND UNDER A DANISH FLAG AND THEREBY UNDER THE NATO UMBRELLA. WHATEVER DEVELOPMENTS TAKE PLACE DURING THE HOME RULE PROCESS IN GREENLAND, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT U.S. INTERESTS THERE TO BE THREATENED IN THE COURSE OF THE NEXT FEW YEARS. DEAN

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